

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-28. (Canceled)

29. (New) A process for preparing a sweetener comprising combining sucrose, an acceptor molecule that is a sugar or a sugar alcohol having free hydroxyl groups at one or more of carbon positions numbers 2, 3 and 6 that can accept a glucose unit from sucrose, and a glucansucrase enzyme so as to prepare a sweetener having at least 20% alpha 1-3 linkages and at least 20% alpha 1-6 linkages, wherein the ratio of sucrose to acceptor molecule is at least 8:1.

30. (New) The process of claim 29, wherein the ratio of sucrose to acceptor molecule is at least 9:1.

31. (New) The process of claim 30, wherein the ratio of sucrose to acceptor molecule is 9:1.

32. (New) The process of claim 30, wherein the ratio of sucrose to acceptor molecule is at least 10:1.

33. (New) The process of claim 29, wherein the acceptor molecule is maltose.

34. (New) The process of claim 29, further comprising removing fructose from the sweetener.

35. (New) The process of claim 34, wherein the sweetener contains less than 50% fructose.

36. (New) The process of claim 29, wherein the glucansucrase enzyme is obtained from lactic acid bacteria.

37. (New) The process of claim 29, wherein the glucansucrase enzyme is obtained from *Leuconostoc mesenteroides*.

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38. (New) The process of claim 37, wherein the glucansucrase enzyme is obtained from *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* strains NRRL B 1121, 1143, 1149, 1254, 1297, 1298, 1355, 1374, 1375, 1377, 1399, 1402, 1433, 23185, 23186, 23188, 23311, 742, 523 or 21297.
39. (New) The process of claim 38, wherein the strain is *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* NRRL B 21297.
40. (New) A sweetener prepared according to the process of claim 29.
41. (New) A food comprising the sweetener of claim 40.
42. (New) A beverage comprising the sweetener of claim 40.
43. (New) A process for reducing the glycemic index of a food or beverage composition comprising incorporating into the food or beverage composition the sweetener of claim 40.